

StarLink is likely to pose a serious security risk
Preferably defer its operations in India
Institute an independent judicial enquiry

E A S Sarma

Former Secretary to the Government of India

To

Shri T V Somanathan

Cabinet Secretary

Government of India

Dear Shri Somanathan,

I refer to my letter of June 2, 2025 in which I had cautioned the government that allotting satellite spectrum to Starlink administratively violated the apex court's direction in the 2G Spectrum case and that it would pose a serious threat to national security. In that letter, I demanded that an independent judicial enquiry be instituted to examine the circumstances under which the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) had rushed into allowing StarLink to use India's satellite spectrum in preference to earmarking it exclusively for ISRO, defence services and CPSEs (<https://countercurrents.org/2025/06/administrative-allocation-of-satellite-spectrum-to-starlink-violates-supreme-courts-direction-in-the-2g-spectrum-case/>)

It was not the first time that I had cautioned the government on this, as my previous correspondence at the following links reveals:

<https://countercurrents.org/2024/12/satellite-spectrum-should-be-exclusively-reserved-for-strategic-uses-do-not-compromise-national-security-to-accommodate-foreign-telecom-players/8-5-2025>

<https://countercurrents.org/2025/03/elon-musks-starlink-forming-a-cartel-with-the-two-domestic-telecom-operators-to-appropriate-strategic-domestic-satellite-spectrum/>

<https://countercurrents.org/2025/02/india-should-tighten-safeguards-against-starlink/>

<https://countercurrents.org/2024/11/reserve-satellite-spectrum-for-isro-defence-applications-imprudent-and-illegal-to-allot-it-to-elon-musks-starlink/>

Evidently, on extraneous considerations, the government has chosen to ignore my cautionary letters and go ahead with granting clearance to StarLink.

I am not sure whether the government is aware of the news reports during the last couple of days which indicate that StarLink had infringed security restrictions even in the USA, at the White House itself (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2025/06/07/starlink-white-house-security-doge-musk/> & <https://www.wionews.com/world/-bypass-security-no-tracking-no-records-elon-musk-s-doge-secretly-transmitted-white-house-data-via-starlink-1749380621741>).

In particular, these reports say

"Elon Musk's team at the U.S. DOGE Service and allies in the Trump administration ignored White House communications experts worried about potential security breaches when DOGE personnel installed Musk's Starlink internet service in the complex this year,"

"Elon Musk's team at the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) installed a Starlink Wi-Fi terminal on the White House roof and used it to transmit a large amount of data, all of it undetected,"

These reports, I hope, will wake up the government to the security risk posed by foreign players in India and the need for the government to exercise utmost caution in allowing them use of spectrum in general and, satellite spectrum in particular.

In fact, I would go one step further and suggest that satellite spectrum be earmarked exclusively for ISRO, defence services and CPSEs.

The manner in which DOT had gone out of the way to give a special treatment to Elon Musk and StarLink, throwing caution and legality to the wind, raises serious concerns about the propriety of the deal itself. It calls for an independent judicial enquiry. Failing to subject the StarLink deal to such an enquiry would lead one to draw the inference that the government does not wish to hold itself accountable to the Parliament and the public.

Yours sincerely,

E A S Sarma

Visakhapatnam

June 9th 2025

